

TURKEY



Turkey A democratic, market-oriented U.S. and NATO ally in a volatile region, Turkey is a front-line state in fighting terrorism, drug trafficking, organized crime, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). As a victim of both domestic and international terrorism, Turkey finds itself in need of improved counter-terrorism capabilities and finance controls. Turkey has also seen an increase in nuclear smuggling and WMD-related incidents, which underscores the need for training in illicit weapons detection, licensing, and enhanced border controls. Turkey continues to face a transshipment drug problem from Afghanistan to Europe through Eastern Turkey. U.S. assistance will build capacity in Turkey's law enforcement agencies and maximize Turkish cooperation with other countries, especially Afghanistan.

FOREIGN RELATIONS: Turkey's primary political, economic, and security ties are with the West, although some voices call for a more "Eurasian" orientation.

Turkey entered NATO in 1952 and serves as the organization's vital eastern anchor, controlling the straits leading from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean and sharing a border with Syria, Iraq, and Iran. A NATO headquarters is located in Izmir. Besides its relationships with NATO and the EU, Turkey is a member of the OECD, the Council of Europe, and OSCE. Turkey also is a member of the UN and the Islamic Conference Organization (OIC). In December 1999, Turkey became a candidate for EU membership. On December 17, 2004, the EU decided to begin formal accession negotiations with Turkey in October 2005.

Turkey and the EU formed a customs union beginning January 1, 1996. The agreement covers industrial and processed agricultural goods. Turkey is harmonizing its laws and regulations with EU standards. Turkey adopted the EU's Common External Tariff regime, effectively lowering Turkey's tariffs for third countries, including the United States.

On October 3, 2005, Turkey and the EU reached agreement for Turkey to begin negotiations on accession to the European Union. Turkey and EU officials have begun the process of screening Turkey's laws and policies in order to begin negotiating the individual chapters required for ultimate EU accession.

Turkey opened and provisionally closed in 2006 one EU negotiating chapter on science and technology. Another chapter on statistics was opened in February 2007, and two more were opened in June 2007. Eight chapters, mostly related to trade, were suspended by the European Council in December 2006 after Turkey declined to open its ports and airports to Cypriot vessels--a commitment Turkey made as part of the Ankara Protocol and its EU Customs Union membership. Two new chapters were opened in each of the successive EU presidencies--December 2007 under the Portuguese, June 2008 under the Slovenians, and December 2008 under the French--bringing the total to ten open chapters.

Turkey is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO). It has signed free trade agreements with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), Israel, and many other countries. In 1992 Turkey and 10 other regional nations formed the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) Council to expand regional trade and economic cooperation. Turkey chaired BSEC in 2007 and hosted in Istanbul the 15th BSEC Summit in June 2007.

In October 2008 Turkey was elected to hold a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council for 2009-2010. Turkey took that seat January 1, 2009 and will hold the rotating presidency in June 2009.

U.S.-TURKEY RELATIONS: U.S.-Turkish friendship dates to the late 18th century and was officially sealed by a treaty in 1830. The present close relationship began with the agreement of July 12, 1947, which implemented the Truman Doctrine. As part of the cooperative effort to further Turkish economic and military self-reliance, the United States has loaned and granted Turkey more than \$12.5 billion in economic aid and more than \$14 billion in military assistance.

U.S.-Turkish relations focus on areas such as strategic energy cooperation, trade and investment, security ties, regional stability, the global war on terrorism, and human rights progress. Relations were strained when Turkey refused in March 2003 to allow U.S. troops to deploy through its territory to Iraq in Operation Iraqi Freedom, but regained momentum steadily thereafter and mutual interests remain strong across a wide spectrum of issues. On July 5, 2006, Secretary Rice and then-Foreign Minister Gul signed a Shared Vision Statement to highlight the common values and goals between our two countries and to lay out a framework for increased strategic dialogue. U.S. President George W. Bush welcomed Prime Minister Erdogan to Washington for a White House visit on November 5, 2007, during which he committed to provide greater assistance to Turkey in its fight against terrorism from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK or Kongra Gel), which he characterized as a "common enemy" of Turkey, Iraq, and the United States. He reiterated this commitment during President Gul's January 8, 2008, White House visit.

After just three months in the White House, President Barack Obama paid a historic visit to Turkey April 5-7, 2009. During the visit, he spoke before the Turkish Parliament and outlined his vision of a reinvigorated U.S.-Turkish partnership based on mutual interests and mutual respect. Secretary Clinton has also prioritized the U.S.-Turkey relationship, and included a stop in Turkey on her first European trip, visiting Ankara on March 7, 2009. The U.S. and Turkey for several years have had a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement, which met in Turkey in January 2009. In 2002, the two countries indicated their joint intent to upgrade bilateral economic relations by launching an Economic Partnership Commission, which last convened in Washington in April 2008. In 2006, Turkish exports to the U.S. totaled about \$5.4 billion, and U.S. exports to Turkey totaled \$5.7 billion.

Peace and Security: The bulk of U.S. assistance to Turkey focuses on the modernization of the Turkish Armed Forces and improving interoperability with U.S. and NATO forces. Professional military education at U.S. military schools is a key component of this modernization effort. Such assistance is essential to enable the Turkish military to participate in the reconstruction and stabilization efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, and to meet the challenges of regional instability, international terrorism, and long-term peacekeeping. U.S. assistance also focuses on efforts to combat narcotics trafficking, transnational crime, terrorism, and the spread of WMD. U.S. assistance supports cooperation between Turkish and Afghan law enforcement officials and helps Turkish authorities target regional criminal organizations. The United States seeks to develop Turkey as a base for regional leadership on organized crime, counternarcotics, nonproliferation, and counter-terrorism. U.S. assistance supports outreach programs to encourage greater Turkish commitment to fight al Qaeda and other extremist Islamist groups as well as efforts to counter the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) terrorist group in Turkey and develop trilateral U.S.-Iraqi-Turkish counter-terrorism cooperation. To prevent WMD proliferation, U.S. assistance supports activities to enhance Turkey's strategic trade control system, training for licensing officers and border guards, and provision of equipment designed to enhance detection, targeting, and inspection capabilities. These programs will be implemented through the Department of Defense and Department State.

Focus on Performance: U.S. assistance will help Turkey to increase its commitment to Afghanistan during the critical election period, including presidential and provincial elections in 2009 and parliamentary elections expected in 2010. The Government of Turkey seeks to take command of NATO's Regional Command in Kabul in early FY 2010, which is a significant commitment for Turkey's forces considering their commitments in counter-terrorism operations in Turkey's southeast. This commitment will require deployment of additional Turkish soldiers and civilian experts. The programs allow the U.S. to modernize the training, doctrines and procedures used by the Turkish military, resulting in more efficient military cooperation. Besides improving interoperability, exposure to U.S. military structure will help support the balance between civil and military authority in Turkey and strengthen democratic institutions.